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THE NATIONAL CHRISTMAS BILL.

Nothing is so brilliant or so popular as lavish expenditure; nothing is so mean or so unpopular as the collection of income. The eminent dust-contractor, the repulsive bone-boiler, the extensive rag-merchant, are very different people in the eyes of the world when spending the income which they make, than when making the income which they spend. As is the individual, so is the nation; and the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer is no exception to the rule.

Figures and financial records are dull things—that has been settled long ago. All aldermen are fat, all misers are lean, all authors are bad men of business, and all statisticians are heavy—heavy as lead. The national balance-sheet is periodically presented to the averted gaze of a liberal tax-paying public, and consigned to the limbo of unmitigated bores. There is nothing amusing about it; it has not even the merit of full information, it is so wonderfully concentrated and condensed; figured, but not figurative, and dry as the remainder-biscuit after a voyage—the voyage of Vasco de Gama. It is a great bore to the Treasury to have to make it up, and they are determined that the House of Commons shall suffer for its impertinent curiosity. Why cannot money be voted and spent without any record? What is book-keeping?—a thing only known in vulgar trade. What is double entry?—double trouble. Look at Lord Vellum—there is a real gentleman, if you like. Happy the man who has the good-fortune to be his steward. ‘Spwend what you like,’ says his lordship; ‘but, for Gawd’s sake, don’t bother me with these horrid bills!’ Noble, aristocratic creature, why cannot the whole country follow his illustrious example? Short reckonings make long friends? Pshaw! A nation of soap-boilers!

There is instinct, if not talent, in these Treasury opinions and policy. Make figures acceptable and popular, make the details of public finance—especially the details of the national income—familiar to every peasant and liberal tax-payer in the land, and money-questions in politics would no longer be the easy butt of ridicule which they are at present. Will this financial millennium ever come? Our national expenditure has increased by an annual twenty millions, compared with the expenditure of twenty years ago. Our great and noble country spends more in government every year than the United States with a greater extent of country, and an equal population; and it is considered a defunct absurdity to inquire why. Let a literary fool rush

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in where Treasury angels fear to tread, and discourse, like a dull dog, as he is, upon the facts and beauties of the public balance-sheet.

Income and expenditure, then, in round numbers, for the year ending March the thirty-first, Eighteen hundred and fifty-eight, discarding the balances in hand, were each about seventy millions. First, I will take the expenditure, or what the nation spent; as our national, like our individual expenses, are often incurred in advance of our income. I will go to the heroic—the brilliant side of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, before I turn to his mean and repulsive side. I will look at the noble prodigal scattering his money broadcast among a gaping, admiring crowd, before I trace that money to the rifled till of a chandler’s shop. We are a great nation, for we govern, or attempt to govern, one-half of the world; we are a wonderful nation, for we tax the child’s humming-top for the sinews of our greatness.

Seventy millions being spent, it is required to know how. First comes the interest and management of the National Debt, which reaches nearly twenty-nine millions; then the army and navy charge, amounting to twenty-three millions and a half. This is divided into land-forces, works and stores, and embodied militia—thirteen millions; leaving the difference of ten millions and a half for one year’s navy. Thirdly, there is a little group of nearly five millions, which may be labelled as being miscellaneous. The compensation to the King of Denmark for the Sound dues, over one million; the whole produce of the paper-duty swept away at a blow. There is the Persian expedition, which absorbs nearly a million; the expenses of the late war with China, reaching £591,000; redeemed Exchequer bonds, exactly two millions; and the sinking-fund of the war-loan, one quarter of a million sterling. Fourthly, comes a large group, which ranges itself under the head of Civil Expenditure, swallowing the very considerable sum of thirteen millions and a half. Then we come to another group, headed Law and Justice, which costs the country upwards of three millions. This sum is divided among England, Scotland, and Ireland; the first taking just upon two millions, the second nearly a quarter of a million, and Ireland just over £300,000.

The next item of expenditure we arrive at is that of Education, Science, and Art, which absorb rather over one million. Then we reach the group of Diplomatic, Colonial, and Consular Services, rather over half a million, one-third, consisting of diplomatic salaries and pensions in most parts of the world, being paid out of the Consolidated Fund. Then we

come to Superannuations and Charities, which reach nearly a quarter of a million.

The next group we reach is headed Special and Temporary Objects; they cover a very wide field, and absorb L.600,000. Then we are presented with the Civil List, a sum of nearly L.400,000, appropriated out of the Consolidated Fund, for the consumption of majesty and majesty's household. Next to this item comes the group of Annuities and Pensions, extending to L.300,000 only, but consisting of details somewhat more interesting and unexpected than usual—of annuities to the royal family, pensions for naval and military services, civil services and judicial services, hereditary pensions to the Duke of Marlborough, heirs of the Duke of Schomberg, and moiety of Earl of Bath's pension, servants of George III., and Queens Charlotte and Caroline, pensions formerly on Civil List, trustees of Knipe and Hamilton, and their children; in Ireland, loss of emoluments by the Union, officers of the late Irish Treasury, retired officers of justice, and pensions formerly on Civil List.

The next group of items is headed Interest on Loans, Secret Service, &c., and its total expenditure is nearly L.200,000. There are Interest and Sinking Fund on Greek Loan, the same on Russian-Dutch Loan, commissioners of Greenwich Hospital, Secret Service, formerly charged on Civil List; Receiver-general Duchy of Lancaster, in lieu of prisage and butlerage of wines; Receiver-general Duchy of Cornwall, compensation for loss of duties on the coinage of tin, and compensation for loss of offices in connection with the same. Then comes the Miscellaneous Expenditure, consisting of civil contingencies and the marriage of the Princess Royal, amounting together to nearly L.150,000. The list is concluded with the Expenditure from Crown-lands, which consumes in salaries, allowances, pensions, payments, and office-fees, nearly the same amount as the civil contingencies.

So much for the brilliant, heroic expenditure side of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and now let me turn to the other side—the side which produces the fund that pays for all this diplomacy, liberality, pensioning, and government. There is as much difference between the two as there is between the great dust-contractor riding in state in Rotten Row, and the same dust-contractor sitting in his mean, black, dirty counting-house. Great dukes, lords, and marquises who sit in palaces or mansions, condescending to receive pensions, and nourishing a contempt for the vulgar followers of trade, forget that what they take so hungrily from the national financial caldron has, first of all, been thrown in by tallow, eggs, or cheese. That noble army of young gentlemen, old gentlemen, and gentlemen's gentlemen, who sit all day in government castles of indolence, forget that they are feeding upon those vices of their countrymen—the wholesale consumption of tobacco, brandy, and rum. With a stagnation of trade and an increase of sobriety, away goes the fund which pays a host of salaries that are pensions, and another host of pensions that are not salaries, and never have been.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, leaving the dazzling halls of expenditure, and entering the money-grubbing precincts of the national income-shop, presents the productive public with nine divisions of taxation, from which he collects the necessary sum of nearly seventy millions.

I will first take the Stamps, which produce seven millions and a half. There are the Admiralty stamps, bankers' notes, bills of exchange, cards and dice, Chancery fund, civil bill fund, composition for duties on bills and notes, deeds and other instruments, divorce and matrimonial causes stamps, gold and

silver plate, insurance, fire and marine, judgments registry fund, law-fund, legacies and successions, licences and certificates, medicines, newspapers and supplements, penalties and costs recovered, Probate Court stamps, probates of wills and letters of administration, receipts and drafts, and miscellaneous. Next comes the land-tax, which produces nearly two millions upon inhabited houses, and lands and tenements. Then follow the assessed taxes, which produce about one million and a quarter. They are divided into armorial bearings, carriages, dogs, game-duty, hair-powder, horse-dealers, horses, servants, additional 10 per centum, and penalties and cost recovered. The next on my list is the Post-office, which produces three millions. There are postage collected, postage-stamps, commission on money-orders, and miscellaneous receipts. Then come the Crown-lands, which, from rents, sales of old material and timber, and fees, produce about L.400,000. Then there is a group of receipts headed Miscellaneous, producing upwards of one million and a half, and consisting of contribution from East India Company, ditto on offices and pensions, ditto towards merchant seamen's pensions, conscience-money, fees of public officers, income of London, Edinburgh, and Dublin *Gazettes*, king of the Belgian's trustees, savings on grants of parliament and over-issues repaid, superannuation abatements, premium and interest on Exchequer bills sold, small branches of hereditary revenue, unclaimed dividends, various casual receipts, and produce from sales of old naval, military, and civil stores. Then we go to the Property and Income Tax, the backbone of direct taxation, which always produces a million for every penny in the pound imposed. This reaches, in this case, nearly eleven millions and a half. Then we pass to the great group of Excise duties, which produce nearly eighteen millions, by all kinds of annoying, oppressive, and injurious interference with trade. There are hackney-carriages' duty, ditto stage-carriages, game certificates, hops, licences, malt, paper, race-horses, railways, spirits, law-costs recovered, fines and forfeitures, sums received from contributions to late Scotch Excise Corporation Fund, and miscellaneous. Finally, we come to the greatest group of all—the Customs' duties, which produce upwards of twenty-three and a quarter millions, or one-third of the national income. Here it is, in the tariff, that the mean and protective side of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is most clearly seen. The eleven millions of income-tax is produced at a cost of about 2 per centum; the twenty-three millions of customs' duties is subject to a drawback of five times that amount. 'Every tax,' says Adam Smith, 'ought to be so contrived as both to take out and keep out of the pockets of the people as little as possible about what it brings into the public treasury of the state.' 'No,' says the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer; 'I will rather take my stand upon our great dramatist: "He that is robbed, not knowing what is stolen, let him not know it, and he is not robbed at all."' The income-tax is a bold, open-daylight highwayman, who risks his life fairly for his gain. The customs' duties are midnight, petty thieves, who make up their income, bit by bit, in holes and corners, without risk.

The articles, large and small, which produce income in the British tariff, are four hundred and sixty in number. Twenty-one articles out of these four hundred and sixty produce nearly twenty-two millions and three-quarters sterling of revenue, leaving the small balance of over half a million to be made up by four hundred and thirty-nine articles. I will enumerate this little productive army of twenty-one. Butter brings one hundred thousand pounds; coffee, nearly half a million; corn, meal, and flour the same; currants, nearly a quarter of a million;

pepper, nearly one hundred thousand pounds; raisins, the same; silk-manufactures, nearly a quarter of a million; spirits (rum and brandy), upwards of two millions and a quarter; sugar (unrefined, refined, and molasses), upwards of five millions and a half; tallow, about seventy-six thousand pounds; tea, nearly five millions and a half; tobacco and snuff, over five millions and a quarter; wine, nearly one million and three-quarters; and wood and timber, nearly six hundred thousand pounds. Having disposed of the chief productive articles in the British tariff, many of them—as butter, cheese, corn, meal, flour, silk-manufactures, and timber—suffering under a strictly protective duty; and some—as spirits, wine, tobacco, and snuff—producing revenue based, to some extent, upon national vices—I may glance leisurely over some of the inferior producing articles, and also some of the exemptions.

Almonds, both Jordan and the paste of, are taxed; bitter almonds and aloes are free. Arrow-root, tapioca, and all that family of products, pay fourpence-halfpenny the hundredweight; but arsenic and sanguis draconis are free. The appetite of the infant is fruitful to the public revenue; the Cockney Borgia may work under the licence of free-trade. Figs are a nice and fruitful source of revenue; jalap and castor-oil are nasty, but free. Biscuit and bread are saddled with a duty; caviare and senna are perfectly unfettered. Dates and wine are heavily taxed, but salted cucumbers and logwood extract are totally unburdened. Apples, pears, cherries, plums, boys' marbles, and toys of all kinds, sail in under a duty; but rose-water, tobacco-pipes, and sausages are free. Cries of 'Shame!' from the combined youth of the country against the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Why don't he hit one of his own size?

Malt is absolutely prohibited to be imported—a great boon to the farmers—but juniper-berries, angelica root, and gin materials generally come in without any financial or legal restriction. Manure is perfectly free; soap, plain or scented, and wash-balls, are certainly not. Pickles preserved in vinegar are a source of revenue; vegetables preserved in salt are free. Two anomalies present themselves, alluded to before, in passing: port wine is taxed, but the raw material, according to popular report—logwood extract—is free. Bread is taxed; but the raw material—also according to popular report, potatoes, alum, and plaster-of-Paris—is free. Our French protective blockade is very strong. It taxes lace, silk, wine, clocks, china, with many other articles, even to musical-boxes. In these latter amusing toys, the assessment is very minute and exact. Three-pence a tune, played upon a cylinder of four inches in length; but if upwards of four inches, the country wants eight-pence. Accompaniments are extra, even to the extent of half-a-crown. Burgundy wine is taxed, Burgundy pitch is free. Out of a list of nearly fifty seeds, only one is taxed, and that is the unfortunate caraway. Turtle is free, but rice is taxed.

The British possessions, in most cases, are allowed to import goods into the mother-country at a considerable reduction of duty, often reaching 50 per centum, if the productions imported are of native growth. Diamonds, lobsters, bullion, and fresh fish of British taking may be landed without report or entry—a privilege accorded to no other goods. Whatever duties there may be amongst the 460 customs' taxed articles, that annoy the young, the old, the feeble, and the strong, it must be a comfort to all to know that one article is gloriously and notoriously free. This is not corn, for that staple necessary of life still pays a juggling duty of one shilling the quarter, equal on the present price to 2½ per cent.—another protective boon still granted to the farmers

—it is *divi divi*.* Like the old woman who, when snatched from a fearful fire, was found hugging something she had saved from the general wreck, which turned out to be a worthless hearth-broom, the British tax-payer, and professed free-trader, amidst the mass of useless, unproductive—when compared with the cost of collection—protective, restrictive, and immoral duties, may congratulate himself that *divi divi* is free.

The analysis of the British tariff stands thus: It produces one-third of the national income. This third is nearly all collected, from twenty-one articles of general consumption; 439 articles—which, with the twenty-one, make up the 460, the whole number taxed—produce about six hundred thousand pounds, which affords an average of fourteen hundred and thirty pounds each. To pursue the analysis a little further, there are sixty articles that bring less than two hundred pounds each; fifty-three not more than one hundred pounds each; thirty-six not more than twenty pounds each; and thirteen, only five pounds each and under. The persons employed in the collection of excise and customs' duties, on the 1st of January 1857, numbered 5449.

With these facts and figures before him, the intelligent reader may go away a duller, but a wiser man. He will see on one side of the national balance-sheet—the right-hand, or credit side—glory, heroism, and brilliant expenditure; on the other side—the left-hand, or debit side—mean, money-grubbing, and, in some cases, oppressive collection of income. He will find, upon glancing through the British tariff, that notwithstanding our press and platform songs of triumph, we know little more of pure, practical free-trade than Archimedes did of the steam-engine.

POUDRE ROSÉ.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.

I.

A DARK wintry day, in the year of grace 1839, was closing upon the final scene of one of those tragedies of real life which would be affecting, were they not, in France at least, of such everyday occurrence. Eugène Beaudésert, the direct representative of a long line of courtiers, warriors, diplomatists, commencing with the Merovingian kings, and now for some time schoolmaster in Lyon, was dying in a mean apartment *au troisième* of a house in an obscure street of that wealthy and splendid city; not, however, of want, of physical destitution, as the wine, cordials, and various tempting delicacies by his bedside, the heaped-up blazing fagots on the hearth, the presence of an unexceptionable nurse, and, above all, of M. Vermont, a physician of eminence, whose minutes were Napoleons, fully testified. Nor, still judging by its surroundings, ought unsatisfied soul-cravings, hunger of the spirit, to have been felt at that death-bed, since two ministers to spiritual needs, one officious, the other official, were in attendance there. The first, a stout, somewhat rustic-looking man, past middle age, at the entrance of the Abbé Morlaix, the famous preacher at the Church of the Assumption, had hastily returned his balm for hurt minds, Plato's *Divine Dialogue*, to his pocket, and shrunk back to a corner of the room where the fire-blaze revealed him with but fitful indistinctness. I, however, from knowing Jules Delpech so well, can easily identify, through the flashing gloom, that large head, fairly developed intellectually, and that face every way ordinary save for a pair of glittering gray eyes; which, from under cover of the pent-house brows, pierce to a very long way off—further, deeper, indeed, than it is desirable to

* The pod of the *Cesalpinia coriaria*, used in tanning and dyeing.

follow, even in imagination. The countenance withal has not what is usually termed a malignant expression. The most timid person, a girl, would hardly be scared at confronting it upon a lonely road in the evening of such another dark day as this; for plainly, vividly, as that unblest, bastard wisdom called cunning, caution, timidity, are written thereon for duller eyes to read; there is also a certain air of *bonhomie*, assumed it may be—but, if so, habitually assumed—which does much to neutralise the vulpine craftiness of aspect which familiar observers were wont to say faithfully mirrored Jules Delpech's vulpine, crafty soul. A rash judgment, let us hope, in submission to the divine injunction of charity—the charity that thinketh no evil, believeth no evil, with which M. Morlaix, a few minutes since, just before the arrival of the physician, rebuked the moribund's glare of rage, called forth by a somewhat eulogistic allusion to Madame la Baronne de Vautpré; the personage albeit to whom Eugène Beaudésert is indebted for the lay and clerical ministrations which console, or embitter—for there is no interpreting the changeful lights and shadows which flit across that constrainedly calm white face—these last supreme moments of parting life.

There was no warning of how few those moments were in the suave tones of Dr Vermont as he felt the pulse and looked steadily into the eyes of his patient. He merely observed, addressing the nurse, that M. Beaudésert must be kept as quiet as possible; and then turned away with a slight gesture to the abbé, who followed him to the door, where a few whispered words passed between them. The look and manner of the abbé, as he again turned towards the sick man, revealed, clearly as speech, the significance of those whispered words; and Jules Delpech starting up, hurriedly embraced, and bade his friend adieu, as if for a brief time only, pressed one of the cold hands of a girl sitting by the head of the bed, in both his own, softly suggested hope and courage, and glided from the apartment. The nurse, at a sign from the abbé, did the same, and then the reverend gentleman requested the girl to permit him to speak for a few minutes with her father alone. The answer was an outburst of convulsive grief—passionate exclamations of refusal, which the abbé could only partially calm by consenting that she should remain whilst he administered the last rites of his church to the now avowedly dying sufferer; whose thoughts, whilst fully comprehending, as he seemed to do, the abbé's meaning and purpose, were nevertheless—if one might judge by the feeble demonstrations permitted by his fast-failing strength—with his child, with the earthly future of that young life; and but slightly impressed by the imminence of his own death, and the judgment to follow, announced by the symbolic ceremonial, and the solemn words of the priest.

And now, whilst the abbé is fulfilling his appointed function, I may briefly pass in review the previous and determining incidents of the life-career thus prematurely closing; closing prematurely, there can be no question, as far as life is reckoned by length of days, for it was no longer ago than the autumn of 1803, that the birth of Eugène Beaudésert, the first-born of a distinguished general of that name, and Estelle, his wife, *née* Bresson, a rich heiress of Paris, was celebrated in that city with much pomp and *éclat*. Clouds quickly overgrew and darkened the brilliant future that seemed to await the child. General Beaudésert was killed at Marengo; and his widow, to whom, by the provisions of the ante-nuptial contract, her whole fortune reverted, soon married again, became the mother of a numerous family, and gradually so estranged from her first-born, that after his tenth birthday, she never again beheld him, and died without expressing a wish to do so. It is

probable that this unnatural feeling was excited and confirmed by the civilly contemptuous treatment which the plebeian wife of General Beaudésert had met with from her husband's family; one of that section of the Quartier St Germain, which, always with an *arrière-pensée*, capitulated with the Consulate and the Empire for the profitable honours, illegitimate as they might be, and, of course, were, with which it was the weakness of the Man of Destiny to always eagerly reward such condescendence. Madame la Baronne de Vautpré, General Beaudésert's widowed and childless sister, had especially never been at pains to conceal her disdain of her brother's ignoble alliance; and no sooner was it ascertained that *ci-devant* Madame Beaudésert, *née* Bresson, evinced a decided dislike of her son Eugène, than Madame la Baronne became his active partisan and patroness; and an arrangement was finally come to by which the guardianship of the last male scion of the ancient house of Beaudésert was legally transferred from the *roturier* mother to the aristocratic aunt. Madame de Vautpré discharged her new self-imposed duties, everybody agreed, in the most liberal, exemplary manner. Eugène Beaudésert's education was conducted by the first masters; his purse was supplied without stint or grudge; and he had but just completed his eighteenth year, when Madame la Baronne obtained the high favour and honour of a commission in the *Garde Royale* for her fortunate nephew. But, as most of us know, or have heard, blood is stronger than water, especially that which wells up from the mighty arteries which nourish and sustain the common life of a people; and Eugène's precociously manifested tastes, antipathies, predilections—all clearly traceable to his maternal origin—proved to be diametrically opposed to the tastes, antipathies, predilections of the long line of Beaudésert celebrities dating from the Merovingian kings; not one of whom, that unfilial descendant of a noble race sneeringly remarked, could be justly accused of having stained his scutcheon by doing anything useful or helpful to mankind. As examples of the young man's shocking heterodoxy in matters ancestral and armorial, I may instance his proclaimed opinion, that there were in the world men as capable of governing France as Louis le Désiré—an extravagance which cost him his *Garde Royale* epaulets; that Napoleon was at least equal as a general to the great Condé; and that to have created 'a *connoisseur* in dry bones'—otherwise Cuvier the comparative anatomist—a baron, was not a detestable desecration by Bonaparte of that order of nobility! That atrocities like these should so frequently sully the lips of her nephew and heir, was naturally a source of disquiet to Madame de Vautpré; but, to do that lady simple justice, she was far too right-minded and sensible a person to take *au sérieux* the froth-follies which flow so copiously from the lips of vain and volatile youth; and she more than once took occasion to observe in his hearing, that so long as her nephew *did* nothing in derogation of his high lineage, whatever he might think or say, would not affect his present or future position as far as she had control over it. Eugène Beaudésert was in his twentieth year, when Madame la Baronne felt or fancied that it might be expedient to at once clearly define *what* it was that to do, or to leave undone, would fatally compromise the young man's future. She did so in the mild impassive manner natural to her, after placing in his hand a draft on Lafitte for the large sum he had just intimated an immediate and pressing occasion for.

'You were conversing for some time, I noticed, at the ball the other evening, with the Count and Mademoiselle de Cevennes; what, frankly now, is your impression, Eugène, of the young lady?'

'My impression of Mademoiselle de Cevennes!

Frankly, then, no impression at all—except, *ma foi*, the vague one of a perfectly well-dressed commonplace young person, nowise distinguishable from the crowd of perfectly well-dressed commonplace young persons we met there.

'I have reason to believe,' continued Madame de Vautpré, 'that the proposal of an alliance by marriage of the Beaudésert and Cevennes families would be favourably entertained by Monsieur le Comte de Cevennes.'

'*Ploît-il, madame!*' exclaimed the startled nephew, flushing scarlet.

'In other, though scarcely plainer words,' resumed Madame de Vautpré, 'that were Eugène Beaudésert to become a suitor for the hand of Louise de Cevennes, he would not be exposed to the mortification of a refusal.'

'You must be jesting, madame,' rejoined the nephew with some temper. 'What have I done, that it should be proposed to wed me with such an incarnation of ugliness, ill-temper, and Satanic pride, as Mademoiselle de Cevennes?'

'That is your *vague* impression of the lady, is it? It is not a flattering one, at all events; and do not fear, Eugène, that I shall ever urge you to blaspheme the holy sacrament of marriage.'—I should here state that it had been for some time whispered in certain circles that Madame la Baronne de Vautpré was growing terribly devout—'by uniting yourself indissolubly with a woman you could not love or esteem; however'

'*Ma chère tante,*' interrupted Eugène, seizing Madame de Vautpré's hand, and kissing it with fervour—'you are so good.'

'It is well, at the same time, to remind you, Eugène,' continued Madame la Baronne, with her usual calm smile and quiet evenness of voice, 'that I expect from you a similar abnegation of selfish feeling in the affair of marriage—which is to say that you will never think of uniting yourself with a person whom I could not love or esteem! Above and before all, Eugène'—and here the speaker's earnestness lent almost tragic force and depth to Madame de Vautpré's mild, steadfast look, and tranquil measured tones—'do not fail to bear constantly in mind that to follow your father's unhappy example, by contracting a *mésalliance*, would be simply and definitively to pronounce irrevocable sentence upon yourself—not merely of immediate separation between you and me, but of the forfeiture of your else assured inheritance of the large possessions, which are, as you are aware, at my absolute disposal.'

'My dear madam,' Eugène managed to enunciate without much stammering, and with an affectation of unconcern with which his changing colour and altogether discomfited aspect did not harmonise, 'you do not imagine, you do not suppose, that I—that you—that'

'I suppose nothing, imagine nothing, Eugène,' interrupted the stately baronne, locking her *écritoire*, and rising to terminate the interview; 'I merely state as a fact to be carefully borne in mind, that were you so insane as to contract a discreditable marriage—and by discreditable marriage I mean one that I could not sanction—you from that moment would be my nephew in name only, assuredly in nothing more. Do you return to dine? No; well, I shall be sure to meet you at Madame Morny's. Adieu.'

An indifferent passer-by would have been struck by the extreme disquietude evinced by Eugène Beaudésert as he left his aunt's splendid mansion; but in life's careless April-time the clouds pass swiftly; and one little hour had scarcely elapsed since Madame de Vautpré's words had fallen so ominously upon his ear, when they were remembered only as the casual expression of a hasty resolve, which could

never be carried out; for was not he, Eugène Beaudésert, the only living being through whom the name, the glory, and the greatness of the Beaudéserts could be preserved, and continued for the admiration and reverence of unborn ages! That great irreversible fact would necessarily outweigh all minor considerations, when poised in so very ancestral a mind as that of Madame de Vautpré, who had, besides, displayed such Christian kindness in relation to that abominable Mademoiselle de Cevennes—the young lady that had graciously, it seemed, intimated—the amiable Gorgon!—that she would not refuse him the blessing of her hand, should he venture to solicit the precious gift. Ugh!

The repulsive idea thus suggested quickly gave place to another and very different one—that of *cette jeune et charmante Adrienne*, whom it would be impossible not to love, were her father, instead of being a *capitaine de dragons en retraite*, a Paris shopkeeper. At that moment, the church-clocks chimed half-past two, reminding the young dreamer that by the time he had reached the jeweller's, and received in exchange for his munificent aunt's draft the superb necklace upon which Adrienne Champfort had set her heart, it would be as much as he could do to reach Clichy by the hour he had appointed to be there. This was decisive; and by three o'clock, Eugène Beaudésert, with the necklace—a trifle, which cost him five thousand francs, no more—safe in his pocket, was rattling gaily along the road leading to the modest dwelling of his beautiful *fiancée*, and then onwards, downwards, to marriage, remorse, ruin, despair—finally, to the dark room *au troisième* in the Rue du Bac, Lyon, where the Abbé Morlaix is even now administering the *viaticum* to the heir of all the Beaudéserts! An old, sad story, of which I need only further give the headings of the chapters intervening between the bridal and the burial.

Madame la Baronne de Vautpré was informed of the marriage of Eugène Beaudésert with Adrienne Champfort by a long and eloquent letter from the bridegroom; to which an immediate answer was returned, enclosing a draft for ten thousand francs, and briefly stating that Madame de Vautpré wished Monsieur and Madame Beaudésert happiness, in the state of life they had chosen for themselves; but, as Monsieur Beaudésert had been timely and emphatically warned would be the case, Madame de Vautpré no longer looked upon that gentleman as her nephew, or as one possessing the slightest further claim upon her.

It was all in vain, as the ten thousand francs, and at last the costly ornaments which he had lavished upon Adrienne, melted away, that the alarmed and anxious husband and father—two daughters, Adrienne and Clarisse, were born to him during the first three years of wedded life—put in practice every expedient, every art he was master of, to change his aunt's inexorable decision; Madame de Vautpré was impassible as marble, and as smooth and polished also; her words and manner, in the personal interviews which her nephew contrived to force upon her, whilst clearly expressive of unswerving resolve, never betraying the slightest irritation or anger.

Thus, step by step, poverty came upon the rash couple; the poverty, armed with serpent stings, that trends upon the heels of reckless self-gratification, and which, but for Captain Champfort's pension—a rather considerable one for his position, he being an inferior member of the Legion of Honour—would soon have been destitution; for Eugène Beaudésert, with all his wordy disdain of birth-privileges, persisted in keeping himself fiercely aloof from the contamination of *useful* employments, and none other were obtainable. And did the blind god that had lured them to such a pass, remain to gild the ruin

he had made, to light up with his glowing torch the else drear dwelling where sat Indigence with his black feet upon the cheerless hearth; and Want, ever at the threshold, and waiting but for the death of that white-headed, feeble old man to enter in, deepened the thick gloom with his gaunt forecast shadow? Alas! how could it be so? Was it possible that the enchanting smile with which Adrienne Champfort received the necklace we know of from her delighted lover, should cast its radiance upon the pawn-ticket of that same costly bauble, which her husband, then of some seven sad years' standing, placed in her hand with a sour, fretful caution to put it safely away? The truth was, neither had espoused the intended person. Eugène Beaudésert, Made-moiselle Champfort's idolising admired, was the nephew of Madame de Vautpré, heir to the splendid mansion in the Faubourg St Germain, and the magnificent Château d'Em, near Lyon, of which she had heard so much—a young gentleman, moreover, having free warren of all the jewellers' shops and *modiste* establishments in Paris, the *entrées* of Tuilleries balls, and possessed of a thousand other transferable and charming gifts and privileges—surely a very different person from the pale, care-worn, listless man, whose stockings she darned with delicate fingers, at the faintest pressure whereof, in the old fast-fading time, those now downcast unregarding eyes had flashed with rapture! And though still retaining much of her brilliant form and feature-beauty, was Madame Beaudésert, wan wife and mother, eternally busied with household cares, necessarily negligent of the elegances of attire, impatient of the present, regretting the past, the fairy being pictured in the youthful imagination of Eugène Beaudésert as the honoured and admired mistress of his inherited splendours, the grace and genius of the courtly circles to which it would be his chiefest pride to have raised her? Clearly not. Do not suppose that biting, bitter words—hasty and quickly repented of, it may be—such as escaped Adrienne's lips, when, as she was walking with her husband and children in the hot, dusty Champs Elysées, Charles Baudin, the rich grocer's son, whose hand she had refused for that of Madame de Vautpré's nephew, dashed past in his new cabriolet with Madame Baudin, his richly apparelled, very pretty wife by his side—words which ever after rankle in the memory, did not frequently pass between Monsieur and Madame Beaudésert. And yet she was not, as the world goes, an unaffectionate wife and mother, nor he a bad unloving husband and father. Both possessed amiable qualities—amiable qualities, I mean, of an ordinary degree—and we know that none but those supremely angelic unflawed natures, whose only ascertainable dwelling-place, in my experience, is the brains of boys, girls, and authors, can illumine the bleak wastes of life with perennial radiance, make constant sunshine in the shadiest places, sing ceaseless songs of gladness upon empty stomachs, and delightedly disport themselves in the lowest social quagmires, from whatever height thereto hurled down!

To that bright band, Monsieur and Madame Beaudésert assuredly did not belong. They, however, rubbed along disconsolately, till the death, in 1836, of Captain Champfort; when Eugène, roused to spasmodic exertion, left his wife and youngest child Clarisse, at Cligny with the widow, and set out on foot with his daughter, dreamy Adrienne, for the Château d'Em, where Madame de Vautpré had for some years constantly resided, determined upon one more effort—if not to regain her good-will, at least to wrest from her by importunity the means of modest existence. His aunt refused to see him, and returned his letters unopened; wearied out at length, as well as seriously warned by the authorities, that to persist in

his annoyance of Madame la Baronne de Vautpré, would bring unpleasant consequences upon himself, he—by the advice of his new friend, Jules Delpech, at whose house, distant about a league from the château, he had taken up his temporary abode—hired an apartment in the Rue du Bac, Lyon; and chiefly in the hope of touching his aunt's heart through her pride, advertised in the local papers that Eugène Beaudésert, ex-captain of the Garde Royale, gave lessons in reading, writing, arithmetic, and elementary mathematics. This notable expedient failed as completely as all previous ones. Madame de Vautpré was immovable by such feeble devices; but a more potent agent than the disinherited descendant of the Beaudéserts was at hand, bringing fullest relief to the sufferer, and rebuke, remorse to his obdurate, pitiless relative. Eugène Beaudésert fell suddenly ill; the long fever of despair had at length consumed the golden oil of life, and the *sœur de charité*, whose mission of mercy took her to that poor abode, saw that yet a few hours and the divine lamp would expire on earth, to be relumed only in His presence whose breath first touched it with celestial fire. Having clearly possessed herself of the melancholy story, sister Agnes lost no time in endeavouring to secure the good offices of the Abbé Morlaix, who, she knew, was the confessor of Madame de Vautpré, reputedly one of the most devout ladies of France. This was not a difficult task; and the abbé, first visiting the moribund, hastened at once to the great lady's presence. Never was the abbé's sonorous eloquence more vigorously exerted; and as he, with the authority of a church of which Madame de Vautpré was a fanatical adherent, entreated, menaced, commanded, her obduracy and pride of heart, insensible to the pleadings of humanity, yielded to religious terrors; before the interview terminated, it was settled that all money could do to avert or delay the stroke of the destroyer was to be essayed; and, that should her nephew not recover, his eldest daughter, Adrienne, was to be received at the Château d'Em, avowedly as Madame de Vautpré's heirress. One condition, however, was peremptorily insisted upon, which was, that Adrienne should be separated from her family, who would be permitted to see her once only in each year; the mother and sister to be paid a yearly pension of four thousand francs during Madame de Vautpré's pleasure, which meant so long as they and Adrienne rigorously complied with the condition of separation from each other. This arrangement Eugène Beaudésert readily though ungraciously acquiesced in—I mean that he neither felt nor affected gratitude for the tardy and fear-extorted concession—and he commanded his reluctant daughter to comply therewith when he was gone, as she valued his blessing and her mother and sister's welfare.

Of that young girl—of Adrienne Beaudésert, whom we just now saw passionately refuse to abandon for a moment the post assigned to her by filial love and duty—I have not as yet spoken, though it is around her the interest of this narrative will mainly gather. It will, however, be only necessary in this place to premise that Adrienne Beaudésert will be thirteen on her next birthday, that she is well formed and tall of her age, and that her now death-pale complexion, eyes swollen and red with weeping, loose untended hair, obscure a beauty as exquisite as that of her mother at the same age; whilst even through that clouding veil of tears and terror, the infantine candour, the faith—how shall I express myself?—the simple trustfulness, verging upon credulity, that marks her character, is strikingly apparent. There are lines, however faint, nascent as yet, indicative of firmness about her sweet, rose-lipped mouth, which cannot be too soon developed and confirmed. That simple, credulous predisposition has unhappily

been fostered, exaggerated by the education, if it can be called one, she has received, chiefly from her grandmother; an honest, simple-minded native of Provence, who has peopled the child's mind with the thousand-and-one legends of fairies, demons, witch-charms, potent alike for good and evil, received as gospel-truth in that part of France; and in which her grand-daughter believes as firmly as in the ogre-like instincts of the dreaded relative to whose abhorred companionship or custody her father's last commands have doomed her. Childhood's common dreams, it may be said. Yes, but will they, as such illusions usually do, exhale and pass away in the expanding light of reason, or remain hidden, latent in the mind of Adrienne Beaudésert, till, under stimulating conditions, they start into fatal life and activity? This is the yet unsolved enigma of the story of the *Poudre Rosée*.

AN EVIL SEEMINGLY WITHOUT A REMEDY.

THERE is one evil under the sun without a remedy, and that is the power of what is called Fashion over women. In some mysterious way, it comes to be understood that the correct thing for ladies this winter is to carry an amount of inflated dress round the lower part of their persons, which will make them from ten to twelve feet in circumference. Implicitly they submit to have themselves so dressed, as if it were some supernal decree which it was futile to try to resist, let the consequences be never so inconvenient to themselves and the society of which they form a part. The resulting contour of the figure is, in the first place, ridiculous; in the second place, immoral, because false. It involves waste, to the distress of those who have to pay the milliners' bills, and to the offence of God, who tells us that not merely our superfluities, but much of our ordinary means, should be bestowed upon those who want. Finally, it creates danger, for a dress sweeping wide of the person is apt to catch fire, and often does so, with the most tragical effects. Not a month before we write, two daughters of a noble house, had their dresses thus ignited, and, as the arrangement is favourable to combustion, they were so severely burned that they only survived a few days. Yet the inconvenience, the ridiculousness, the immoral falsity, the sinful waste, and the frightful danger, while on all hands acknowledged, are wholly unavailing to abate one inch of the evil. The mysterious decree has gone forth—'we,' say the ladies, 'cannot be singular'—the evil, consequently, great as it is, must be endured.

It is important to observe regarding the subervieny to these mysterious decrees, that there is no progressive improvement. One year, it is one absurdity; another year, another. Balloon-sleeves now—mud-trailing skirts then. Here, invisible bonnets, exposing the head to colds, and the complexion to injury; there, wasp-waists, destroying the play of the organs of circulation and digestion. Always some enormity, and no one better than another, or more partially exemplified. Reasoning on the part of the other sex is wholly in vain to effect any correction—of what use, indeed, is reason, with people who admit the absurdity of their conduct, but say they cannot help it?

Side by side with all this folly, we hear cries from various quarters for the acknowledgment of female equality, and consequent female rights. What an amusing set of enthusiasts! A part is claimed in great and serious affairs for a portion of the community who cannot avoid wearing any ridiculous attire which is proclaimed to be the fashion. A perfect equality

with the reasoners is expected for those who confess themselves below the power of reason.

We lately thought of writing a powerful paper on the custom of typifying everything silly and foolish under the phrase 'an old woman.' It seemed to us unfair, on the part of our sex, to pay such court to women while they were young, pleased to listen for hours perhaps to their prattle, professing compliance with their faintest wishes; idolising, deifying them; yet, after all, turning away from them in their maturer years, when, if anything, they had become wiser and more solid. But a little reflection upon the conduct of women in respect to dress has obliged us to give up our intended article. Our design was, we believe, amiable and gallant—for, be it known, we are extremely kind to women, and great favourites with them—but we now see the position was indefensible. Young women, judged by their conduct in this important part of the economy of life, are evidently no better than old women—not a bit more able to resist weak impulses. They may be described as only old women with the gloss of youth in their favour, the latter peculiarity being alone that which brings them the deference which is denied to their seniors. Now, of course, this gloss of youth being a mere external accident, and no proper ground of esteem, whatever it may be of passionate admiration, we must needs admit that the claims of women to respect are equal at all times of their life; and there is no injustice whatever in arraigning them in age for qualities which ought equally to be condemned in them at every period.

No—the proverb must still hold its sway—men of weak tastes and apprehensions must still submit to be called old women, and old women must submit to have such men likened to them—but surely not for ever. There is a progress in most things in this fair world; and we may therefore hope that a moiety of the human race—a most interesting one, and invested with great influence, for good or evil, over the other moiety—is not to be left from age to age to doll-dressing, gossip, and the chronicling of small-beer. The brain of woman, though not so powerful as that of man, is composed of the same elements, and equally capable of an indefinite improvement. The occasion which women have for rational accomplishments and skill in serious affairs is, if not so great as that of men, very great nevertheless; why should they not know something of business, and so save themselves from becoming the victims of Western Banks and other traps? Why should they not take an intelligent concern in the making of laws by which they are to be affected as wives and mothers? Why should they not be somewhat informed in physiology and the laws of health, and so save themselves and their offspring from much of what is now suffered in disease, sickly uselessness, and premature death? They have these things in their power, and by such, and the general cultivation of their minds—above all, of their reasoning powers—they might make their young and old days alike respectable, thus extinguishing the ignominy conferred upon them in this proverbial reference to 'old women,' or rather, as we think we have shewn, to women generally. In no other way that we can think of is there to be an end to this imputation on the sex.

It often is impressed on us that the ordinary women of the world lose an immense portion of the happiness placed by Providence in their power, from want of a right apprehension of their capacities, as well as duties. When a lady of the middle rank has an independent provision, or a father or husband to provide for her, she is generally a very idle person. She reads a little in a literature that gives her no intellectual advance; works at some utterly useless texture—a laborious idleness; or plays indifferently

on some instrument. All very miserable work indeed. Say she even conducts a household, it is but a poor sole occupation for a human being—one day the same as another—no advance—nothing to look forward to, but the same routine of trivial orderings till the end. When we consider what a wonderful power a healthy brain even in woman really is, and what a potential destiny is connected with it, we might well wonder that such multitudes go on thus for ever, unconscious of what they are failing to do, and what they are failing to enjoy. There is not one of the great class in question but might become something unspeakably superior to what she is as a moral and intellectual being, immensely more useful to herself, her family, and society, and, by consequence, immensely more happy.

The fatality of the case is in the low standard set up for women, by themselves and others. It is understood that they are only fit for trifles and drudgeries, and on the plane of trifles and drudgeries they contentedly remain. The dress-follies are but a part of the system which they are thus made to constitute, and consequently we may expect to see these reign, one after another, until some general change shall take place of the nature indicated.

ELLIS'S VISITS TO MADAGASCAR.*

THE Rev. William Ellis, who, a few years ago, became favourably known as the author of *Polynesian Researches*, has just given to the world a work on the island of Madagascar, abounding in matter of extraordinary interest, and which, as a book of travel in an unknown land, must be considered second only in importance to that of Livingstone. Like this last-named personage, Ellis happily unites in himself the missionary, the man of science, and the accurate observer of social phenomena—quite the person, we should think, for spreading with a knowledge of the Gospel the ordinary arrangements of European civilisation. With the view of drawing attention to a volume which might possibly be thought uninteresting to general readers, we shall endeavour to present a sketch of its nature and contents.

The common notion entertained about Madagascar is, that it is a large island in the Indian Ocean inhabited by tribes of ferocious savages, who repel all attempts that may be made to civilise them. The belief that the island is large, and also productive, is of course correct, for it is equal in dimensions to Great Britain and Ireland, and its inhabitants number about three millions. That the people, however, are naturally savage and unimprovable, seems to be the reverse of the truth. In 1817, the country was under the government of a king called Radama, with whom a treaty of alliance was entered into by Sir Robert Farquhar, governor of the Mauritius, on the part of the English government; and forthwith the London Missionary Society despatched not only a body of missionaries, who were well received by the king, but a number of artisans, to impart instruction in the useful arts. Their success was most striking. Having learned the language of the Malagasy, the missionaries arranged a grammar, and prepared elementary books, as well as a translation of the Bible. 'In the space of ten years, after the settlement of the teachers at the capital,' says Mr Ellis, 'not fewer than 10,000 or 15,000 of the natives had learned to read, many of them also to write, and a few had made some slight progress in English; at the same time that a number professed themselves Christians. Within the same period, amongst the

1000 or 1500 youths who had been placed as apprentices under the missionary artisans, some had been taught to work in iron, which abounds in the country; others had been trained to be carpenters, builders, tanners, curriers, shoemakers, &c. These were some of the most satisfactory results of the king's alliance with the English, and the settlement of English missionaries in his country; and although the advantage of a sudden and large increase of firearms amongst a people very partially civilised, may have been questionable, the substitution of legitimate and honourable commerce for the degrading traffic in slaves, the opening of a way for frequent and friendly intercourse with foreigners, the teaching of useful arts, the introduction of letters, with the knowledge of Christianity by which this was followed, will ever cause the treaty between Sir Robert Farquhar and the King Radama to be regarded as one of the most important events in the modern history of Madagascar. Everything was going on prosperously, when in 1828 the good King Radama died; his nephew, Rakatobe, who succeeded him, was assassinated; and the present queen attained the much-coveted supreme authority. Immediately, the old system of idol-worship was re-established; the profession of Christianity was prohibited; the missionaries ordered off; books were confiscated; and, in short, things put back, as far as possible, to their original condition. But it was beyond the power of the queen to extirpate Christianity utterly, although many unhappy proselytes were put to death; nor could her government make the people unlearn those arts of civilised life which had been so beneficially introduced. There ensued, as may be supposed, a curious condition of society, in which various European usages were blended with the manners and habits of an untutored and superstitious race. We should judge, from Mr Ellis's account of affairs, that long ere this, intercourse with enlightened foreigners would have been resumed but for an unfortunate armed collision in 1845. Some French and English traders who had been suffered to reside at Tamatave, the port which had dealings with the Mauritius, complained to their respective governments that they suffered from the application of certain native laws; two French and one English vessel of war were sent to redress these alleged grievances. Failing to effect an amicable adjustment, they bombarded and burnt the town, and killed a number of the inhabitants. The outrage proved worse than useless. The forces had to retire to their ships, leaving thirteen persons, who were made prisoners and put to death. Since this ill-conceived and ill-conducted affair, the island has been officially shut against foreign residents, although a few, chiefly French creoles, are tolerated at Tamatave.

Besides the elements of social improvement introduced through the missionaries, and which, as has been said, nothing could extirpate, there were other grounds of hope left to those who took an interest in the Malagasy. The natives who remained secretly Christians, and who could write, contrived to keep up a correspondence with their fellow-sufferers who had taken refuge in the Mauritius; and, what was of still greater consequence, the Prince Ramonja, son of the queen's sister, and heir-presumptive to the throne, took to the study of the Bible, gave his adhesion to Christianity, and did what lay in his power to assuage the bitterness of religious persecution. It should be further stated, that the idolatrous and superstitious queen did not proscribe the elegances of life, and she continued to have about her natives of rank, who were able to hold communication in English or French. Understanding that through these several agencies certain political changes were in progress, the London Missionary Society judged

* *Three Visits to Madagascar.* By the Rev. W. Ellis. 1 vol. 8vo, with numerous illustrations. Murray, London. 1838.

it expedient to seek for correct information on the subject, and, early in 1853, Mr Ellis was invited to proceed to Madagascar, to make all suitable inquiries, in company with Mr Cameron, then residing at the Cape of Good Hope.

Having arrived at the Mauritius on their journey of discovery, the two travellers embarked in a small vessel, the *Gregorio*, for Madagascar, but with faint hopes of being allowed to enter the country. Up to this period, all trade with the Mauritius was suspended, greatly to mutual disadvantage. The Mauritius depends for cattle on Madagascar, which, on the other hand, relies on imports for various articles of commerce. After a boisterous and uncomfortable passage from the 11th to the 17th of July, the voyagers arrived at Tamatave, and had some difficulty in being allowed to land. At length the harbour-master, who could speak a little English, took them to his house, 'a well-constructed native dwelling, about forty feet long, and between twenty and thirty feet high, with a door in the centre, and a window on each side, the whole front shaded with a veranda, and the house thatched with the leaves of the traveller's tree.' The house, backed by tall palm-trees, formed, with its inhabitants, a good subject for photography, in which Mr Ellis was such a proficient, that his volume is enriched with a large number of likenesses of public characters, picturesque scenes, and the more remarkable kinds of plants; his accomplishment in this respect making for him friends among all classes. During his brief sojourn at Tamatave, he was gratified with the acquisition of a beautiful aquatic plant, the *Ouwirandra fenestralis*, 'one of the most curious of nature's vegetable productions,' as it is designated by Sir W. J. Hooker. This plant, sometimes called the water-yam or lace-leaf, grows below the surface of the water, and only projects its flower-stalks into the air. The large leaves which float beneath consist of long fibrous veins, between which are rows of open work resembling the finest lace or needle-work. Mr Ellis had the satisfaction of bringing away specimens of this singularly beautiful plant, one of which, we believe, may be seen in the Crystal Palace, and another in the Royal Gardens at Kew.

The application to visit the capital being refused, Mr Ellis and his colleague were obliged to return to the Mauritius, and there make known the fact, that, unless the sum of 15,000 dollars was sent as an indemnity for injuries, the queen of Madagascar would not grant permission for the renewal of trade. The amount being immediately subscribed, Mr Cameron and one of the mercantile class were sent with it, and we learn that a few months later, trade with Madagascar was satisfactorily resumed. This event led to a second attempt on the part of Mr Ellis to reach the ruler of the Malagasy. Again the intrepid missionary, June 1854, embarks with a competent supply of photographic chemicals and medicines packed in his luggage, and gets once more safely to Tamatave. He has hardly time to take up his quarters, when he is called to attend a chief who needs medical assistance, which, by long practice, assisted by common sense, Mr Ellis is able to render with some effect—a conspicuous instance of the value of giving missionaries a certain amount of medical knowledge. The house of the sick chief was a dismal hut, with a fire of wood burning on a raised hearth, edged round with stones, and lighted by a lamp of melted fat stuck on the end of a rod which was fixed in the sand. Other appearances, with appropriate comments, may best be given in our author's own words:

'I found the chief lying on a number of mats spread by the side of the fireplace. His wife was sitting near the doorway, working at a fine kind of

mat. One slave was in the outer room, driving away the poultry and pigs as they approached, and another little slave-girl squatting on the ground attended to the fire. The chief said he had removed to this low close hut for the sake of the warmth; the thermometer at that time was generally between 60 degrees and 70 degrees indoors. He was an officer of the government; and while I was talking with him, one of his assistants or aides-de-camp entered with a couple of letters, which, at the chief's request, he read, and which the chief told him he must answer. The young man then went to a box at the side of the room, brought paper, pen, and ink, and seating himself cross-legged on the ground near the lamp, laid a quire of paper on his knee, and having folded a sheet, the chief raised himself upon his mat and dictated, while his secretary wrote a reply. When the letter was finished, the secretary read it aloud, and the chief having approved, the writer brushed the sand adhering to his naked foot with the feathery end of his long pen upon the freshly written sheet, to prevent its blotting, then folded his letter, and departed to despatch it to its destination. There was something singularly novel and suggestive as to the processes by which the civilisation of nations is promoted in the spectacle I had witnessed. Little more than thirty years before, the language of Madagascar was an unwritten language; a native who had been educated at Mauritius was the only writer in the country, and he wrote in a foreign tongue; but now, without any of the appliances which are usually connected with a secretary's desk or office, a quiet, unpretending young man, seated on a mat on the floor in a low dark cottage three hundred miles from the capital of the country, and with his paper on his knee, receives and writes with accuracy and ease the orders or instructions of his superior; and while the latter reclines in his sickness on his mats spread on the floor in his leaf-thatched hut, as his fathers had done for generations before, he has only to utter his wishes or his orders, and these are conveyed to those whom they concern with as much authenticity and correctness as the most formal dispatch from an office of the most civilised nation. And when I reflected that to such an extent had the native government availed itself of the advantages of writing as that in the year 1836, when the late missionaries left the capital, there were four thousand officers employed, who transacted the business of their respective departments by writing, and that such is the benefit or pleasure which the people find in thus communicating with each other, that scarcely a traveller ever journeys from one place to another without being a letter-carrier, I was strongly impressed with the fact that, besides the benefits of their directly religious teaching, missionaries were rendering most important aid towards the enlightenment and civilisation of mankind.'

Permitted to make excursions in the neighbourhood, Mr Ellis prosecuted his inquiries, and was able to improve himself in the language of the country; but he was denied permission to visit the capital, and finally returned to England. At length, the much-desired permission to have an interview with the queen of Madagascar was given. Availing himself of it, Mr Ellis arrived at the island in July 1856, and the account of his more protracted and important visit on this occasion occupies the principal part of the work. The details of his journey to Antananarivo, the capital, which is situated in the interior, and which can be reached only by climbing hills, penetrating trackless forests of gigantic tropical vegetation, fording rivers swarming with alligators, and encountering many other varieties of difficulty and danger—the greater part of the way being performed *à la palanquin*, in a kind of blanket borne by native bearers—form altogether a deeply interesting

narrative. We are told that slavery prevails as a legal institution, but the bondage seems to be of a mild type, and the government disallows any export of slaves. Though allied to the Malay race, the people appear to be addicted to peaceful pursuits, and easily assume the habits and manners of Europeans. The mixture of the barbarisms of past times with the practices of modern civilisation, is peculiarly odd; and we can fancy that the general aspect of affairs is pretty much what might have been seen in Britain shortly after the natives had been tinctured with the notions and manners of their Roman invaders. According to the account before us, we should commit a serious mistake in looking on Madagascar as a territory to be taken possession of at the will of any European power. The country is in a state of transition; and nothing can be more obvious than that by the measures of improvement likely to be carried out by the amiable and intelligent prince who succeeds to the supreme authority, Madagascar will at no distant day make a rapid advance, and take a respectable place among Christian nations.

Reaching the capital, and there being lodged in handsome style, Mr Ellis is immediately visited by Prince Ramonja, a young man of colour, but of European cast of features, who speaks English, and is prepossessing in appearance. 'He wore a black dress-coat and pantaloons, gold-embroidered velvet waistcoat, and white cravat. Without formality or reserve, the prince evinced no want of self-respect. He very cordially welcomed me to the country, and in a short time we all seemed to be perfectly at ease. He asked after my home and family; and was much pleased with a picture of my house, and with portraits of some members of my family, which he said the princess his wife would like to see. I told him I had a small present which my wife herself had worked, and which I had thought of offering to the queen or some member of her family. He said the princess his wife would, he was sure, be much pleased with it. He spoke freely of the accounts he had heard of England, and of his esteem for the English; of his high estimate of the conduct of the English on several occasions which had been reported to him; of the character of their laws, especially in relation to human life, which he said they appeared to regard as a most sacred thing, not to be carelessly nor recklessly destroyed. He spoke of the English having often interfered to protect the weak and the injured, and to prevent wrong.' The prince made inquiries respecting the royal family of England, mentioned his earnest wishes to remain on friendly terms with all European powers, and spoke hopefully of the improvement of Madagascar. He stated that an attempt had been made to convert him to Roman Catholicism, but without avail. On subsequent visits, the prince discussed a number of subjects with earnestness and animation; and it need scarcely be added that he and his wife—a lady in the costume of a London drawing-room—were vastly pleased by being photographed in different attitudes.

Passing over the account of numerous ceremonial interviews with chiefs and officers of the court, we arrive at the grand presentation to the queen, who is described as a portly woman of sixty-eight years of age, with an agreeable expression of countenance. She was decked out in a queenly style; and wore a crown made of plates of gold, with an ornament and charm, something like a crocodile's tooth in gold, in the front plate. The interview took place in an open court-yard in front of the palace, a tall barn-like building with a thatched roof and a veranda on two stories all around. The queen sat in state in the upper veranda, environed by her courtiers, while in the open ground below, which was surrounded by

soldiers, stood the parties to be received with their interpreters. The ceremony passes off agreeably, and Mr Ellis has the further honour of being invited to dinner, the particulars of which we leave him to describe. 'After ascending by a somewhat steep path to the crest of the hill on which the house stands, we reached the front court, where the queen's band, in scarlet uniform (apparently English) was stationed beneath the veranda. On entering, I was received by a number of servants dressed in a sort of livery, consisting of blue jackets bordered with red. I was politely received by the owner of the house, a number of officers, and other company, amongst whom were M. Laborde, and the Catholic priest with whom I had breakfasted. When dinner was announced, we were shewn to our respective places, which were designated by papers bearing our names placed on the table. Mine was on the left hand of the chief officer, and M. Laborde's was immediately opposite.

'The room was large and lofty, furnished with looking-glasses and other articles of European or Asiatic manufacture, having a large sideboard at one end. The table was splendidly furnished with porcelain vases, filled with artificial flowers, and silver vases the size of wine-coolers along the centre. The covered dishes, spoons, and forks, were all silver; the dishes as well as the vases being of native manufacture, after English patterns, and remarkably well executed. On all these articles, as well as on the handles of the knives, a crown, and a bird, the crest of the Hovas (the royal tribe), were engraved.

'As soon as all were seated, my friend the secretary, who sat next me, intimated in English, that as I was a stranger, and the queen's guest, I should now propose her majesty's health; and on a sign from one of the attendants, the band in the veranda played the Malagasy "God save the Queen."

'The dinner commenced with soup, after which an almost endless variety of viands were served. There must have been upwards of thirty different dishes handed round in succession; beef in every form, poultry, game, made dishes in great variety, with pastry, all exceedingly well cooked, especially the rice and the rolls of bread. There was not much wine on the table, the drinking was very moderate, and there were but few toasts. The utmost propriety characterised the deportment of all present; although there were many of the younger members of the aristocracy at the table, the entertainment was more lively, and much less formal, than some at which I had been present in the country. After the dessert, tea was served in small coffee-cups, perhaps instead of coffee, from the supposed preference of the English for tea.

'After the dinner, the chief officer rose, and delivered a speech expressive of the good feeling and hospitality of the Queen of Madagascar towards the subjects of other governments, strangers from across the sea, visiting her country. This was said in allusion to my presence amongst them; and then, stating that it had been the wish of the queen and the Malagasy government to preserve friendship with all foreign nations, he asked why it was that they were so frequently disturbed by reports that the French were coming to take their country. He said that reports to that effect had been recently brought, and were now in circulation amongst the people; and then appealing to me as recently from Europe, he asked if I knew whether these reports were true, and if so, why was it that the Malagasy were to be attacked.

'Appealed to so directly, I could not decline offering a few words on the subject; and after thanking the queen for the kind attention and hospitality I had experienced, and observing that the cultivation

of peaceable and friendly feelings among nations, and the increase of commercial and other intercourse between the people of different countries, was far more conducive to the prosperity of all, than any other course; and that the feelings of good-will towards Madagascar cherished in England had been so fully reciprocated by the consideration and kindness I had received since my arrival, I trusted that corresponding sentiments were cherished by the French.'

The assurances of amity on this and other occasions gave inexpressible satisfaction to the authorities, who seemed very nervous on the subject of invasion. During his residence at the centre of political affairs, Mr Ellis appears to have picked up from conversations with the prince and others, much of the kind of information which was specially the object of his embassy. The leading fact we gather from his statements is, that if Prince Ramonja should ever occupy the throne, the island will be again opened to the missionaries, and go rapidly forward in civilised usages. The prince, unfortunately, has no surviving family, and hence a new element of doubt as to the future. What in the present critical state of matters seems desirable is, that nothing from without should be done to compromise this well-intentioned prince, or bring fresh severities on such natives as privately adhere to Christianity. It need only be added, that Mr Ellis parted with regret from his hospitable entertainers, and having safely reached the coast, sailed for England, where he arrived in March 1857. His volume can be recommended, not less for its valuable information respecting Madagascar, than for various amusing details descriptive of the scenery and social aspects of the Mauritius.

THE SONG OF THE STUDIO.

Is a *feu de joie*, all scarlet and purple, the sun smiled a splendid adieu, disburdening gracious veils of gold gleams among the attendant cloudlets as he journeyed away from them to another land. Nature's mantle was decked with her choicest hues, blended and sweetened, as painters say, after her own peculiar manner, the crimson dimming through violet into gray, the orange melting through green into blue.

These firmamental glories could we guess at only, not perceive fully, as we sat in Tim Doolan's studio, which rejoiced in the orthodox north-east aspect; yet by the reciprocal rose-pink blushes of the east, much of the glow and passion of the west could be surmised. Tim Doolan was at his easel, painting with an energy that bordered on the ferocious.

'I never value the light half so much,' he said, 'as when there is not any.' The day was certainly waning, and Tim stood close to his work, as though he were about to dig his head through the canvas.

'It's provoking, it is—growing dark, just as I'm fetching out and finishing.' He was ever a profligate of the day's early hours, and a miser of its last few moments. I may mention that he was called Tim for no other reason than I could ever ascertain than that it was not his name. His godfather and godmother at his baptism had called him 'William,' but the world had chosen despotically to ignore that appellation as inappropriate and absurd, and had somehow substituted the laconic title by which he now went, and to which he answered more readily than to his legitimate prefix. He was Irish, of course. Very spare and very tall, as though nature had had a sort of second thought about his height, and had suddenly added a foot to his stature, without making any corresponding addition to his other proportions. The result was rather a lineal and angular character of figure. He was prone to colour in his dress—affected flame-hued shirts, and grass-green

cravats. Add long, tumbled, fawn-coloured hair, ragged amber moustache and eyebrows, pale complexion, Irish nose, and light, wild, blue eyes, and you have a faint sketch of Tim Doolan's general aspect. When painting, he wore a Turkish fez with a long purple tassel, and a puce-coloured shooting-jacket, torn about the pockets, and a good deal slashed under the arms.

There was no affectation of finery about the studio. The walls were of a simple whitewash, not recent in execution. Fugitive sketches in black or red chalk, or in charcoal, were the sole decorations. Interspersed were divers names, initials, and memoranda, addresses of models, recipes for colours and vehicles; also caricatures of Tim in various fanciful situations—painful and otherwise. There was no display of fragments of armour, weapons of war, velvet draperies, and other properties occasionally found in the rooms of painters, more especially those of theoretical rather than practical idiosyncrasy. Tim Doolan did not pretend to be an art Croesus; or, if he did, the appearance of his studio certainly contradicted him.

I was sitting looking at Tim as he worked. In a dark corner there could just be traced the filmy outline of a pair of boots emerging from a cloud of tobacco-smoke, the only evidence of the presence of another man in the room. He did not speak nor move, this other man; and his feet were at a considerable elevation above the level of his head. The attitude might have been convenient; it was, at least, unconventional.

'Be ay, Miss Bellairs. How am I to put the high-lights into your eyes, if you keep rolling them about like marbles? And, please, don't wag your head like the mandarin in the *toy-shop*! And if you could keep your double set of pearls invisible, it would be convenient, as it isn't the Bull and Mouth I'm painting.'

I have omitted to state, that that distinguished model, Miss Bellairs, was sitting to Tim, and it was to her the above playful admonition was addressed.

'You shouldn't be always eating, Miss Bellairs; sea-goddesses never took dessert; leastways, they didn't crack walnuts with their teeth.' The lady accepted the reproach with a laugh and a toss of her long, undulating hair—a glossy shot-silk of gold and orange-brown.

'Where's my flake-white—was it that I threw at ye for not sitting still? Oh, here you are! Och, how the light's going! It's not safe painting at this time. There—I'll stop. Miss Bellairs, you're a good one to look at, but a bad one to sit still. Can you come to-morrow? Have you change for a sovereign? You'll leave it till the morning? Ten o'clock? All right: good-bye!'

And the light had gone; Miss Bellairs, too, had vanished. There was gloom in the studio—shortly there was growling.

'It's hard times,' says Tim, drawing himself up in a rectangular stretch; 'one paints and paints, and one don't sell, and the money goes out and it don't come in again.'

No one spoke. The boots slightly moved in their circumambient smoke—that was all.

'And what to call this?' and Tim stood fronting his easel. 'Come and help, you fellows. Will it do for Venus, risen from the sea? Euphrosyne is a good name; or Galatea. Wasn't Galatea a sea-nymph? Or shall I stick a chain round her ankle, and call her Andromeda? But then there ought to be a monster; and Jason—wasn't it Jason? or was it David? Who's up in Lempiere? Andromeda has been painted before.'

'I should rather say she had;' the voice came from behind the boots, which waggled derisively.

'A quotation from Kingsley would impart an air of freshness.'

'Fshaw! New wine into old bottles,' from behind the boots.

'What sea-nymph hasn't been painted? Here, Croppie, come out of that—earn your tobacco like a man; give us a name for this?'

Thus addressed, the boots slowly descended to earth, and a head, and ultimately a body, emerged from the smoke. These belonged to the individual addressed as Croppie.

'What do you want?'

And Croppie moved over to the easel. He was not an artist: he was something more formidable—a critic. He wrote on art; not so much essays as manifestoes—bulls, not Hibernian, but pontifical. He was our friend, therefore he did not spare us, for he rated more than he valued our productions.

It was said of a certain recent French king, that a pear-shape chalked on the wall was understood by everybody to represent his caricature, and of Croppie may safely be asserted, in like manner, that the drawing of a pair of moustaches merely, would have clearly identified him in the minds of his numerous friends and acquaintances. He was all moustache; his moustache was the first idea you conceived of him, and it was also the last. It was of voluminous character, and to obtain its luxuriance he appeared to have mortgaged deeply, if not sacrificed altogether, his other capillary properties; he was closely shorn, save in regard to the dense line cutting across his face, like an obese equator dividing a pale globe. His hair was kept so short, his head seemed to have been under the mowing-machine, as it was not to be conceived that the hand of tonsorial art could work so evenly; but the moustache was wonderful, a thing to see, and having seen, to swear by afterwards; and then the means of expression to which he converted it—when in wrath how he tugged at its ends, as though they were tavern bell-ropes and the waiter deaf; how he sucked it in, and then puffed it furiously forth again; how he pointed up the ends, and looked the incarnation of remorseless defiance; how he turned them down, and donned an aspect of religious resignation. He was snorting through them, angry at being disturbed, when he came to the easel.

'This is only an old study cooked up,' he said contemptuously.

'It's been kicking about here a long time,' said Tim apologetically. 'I thought I'd finish it, and see what I could do with it. It must have a name—just think of one.'

'This is the way with you fellows,' he turned to Tim and myself, but we could feel that he was addressing not us merely, but a large artist-world without. 'You paint first, and then you think, or ask some one else to think for you; you make the thunder, and then run all over the world to find a flash of lightning to fit it;' and he gnawed at his moustache in a rage.

'The baby generally comes before its name is settled,' I suggested humbly.

'I deny that,' cried Croppie, blowing out his moustache; 'in well-regulated families, the names are provided for a long list of probable children, with a liberal allowance for occasional twins; but art is im provident in everything. For this study—what matters what you call it? Shining white flesh is all very pretty, but I don't know any one that wants to hang up Miss Bellairs, *au naturel*, in his drawing-room.'

'Don't be hard, Croppie; these are bad times. I paint what I think will sell; I am obliged to shake hands with Mammon, for he holds money in his fist after all. I got on pretty well a little while ago. There was a run upon rustics then, and I couldn't paint

rural scenes quick enough; now, they're a drug, and I've got smockfrocks and ankle-jacks I'll sell cheap. Pious Sunday-evening pictures were safe things once—venerable parents singing hymns, patting grandchildren's heads, with sunset and church-spire in the distance; but they've been done to death. Chorister boys, with texts underneath, didn't do badly; chain-mail had its admirers. Horses drinking, I've made money by; and sleeping infants, with gauze angels hovering over them, or orphan-kids in crape weeping over parents' graves; but now, hearts are hardening, pockets are drying up, or something horrid's going on—nobody wants pictures. What does it mane? Is it photography? Is it the war with Chayna? No buyers—no buyers—that's the song of the studio now!'

Croppie screwed the ends of his moustache into prolonged points. He gazed at us, calmly severe as a schoolmaster, who, eyeing his intended victim, says to him: 'It's much more pain to me to punish than it is to you to suffer. Hold out your hand.'

'There are men in this world,' he said, with the cool keenness of a dissecting-knife—'There are men in this world who call themselves artists when they are simply tradesmen—dealers in colours and canvas. Painters, who should be also plumbers and glaziers. What is pictorial art? Thought in paint, if you like, but not paint merely.'

Tim sat down, and meekly crushed himself into an acute angle.

'Is the artist mind but a parrot intelligence?' went on Croppie didactically. 'No! Why, then, do so many of you paint looking over the shoulders of other men? Why do you elect to study their easels in preference to the eternal picture-gallery of Idea, of Nature, of Life, around you? One man among you lights on the *Vicar of Wakefield*, and you all hasten to smother that minister with paint; one reads *Gil Blas*, and you all read it; one finds the body of Harold, and then you all find it.'

Tim, aghast, fell back, by way of variety, into an obtuse angle.

'Examine the walls of an exhibition; take stock of the thoughts there—you'll not find many. If you can't think, you might observe; but we don't even get honest observation of nature. We get only shams—cosmetised with prettiness, stuccoed with bad sentiment, to make them, as you think, saleable; or we have the rags and tatters of other men's notions, worn greasy and threadbare, pounded up into pictorial shoddy.'

He thrust his moustache so far into his mouth, I thought he would have choked himself.

Tim was smitten dumb, but not motionless. He whirled up his arms, and converted himself into an accurate representation of a railway semaphore giving the signal 'Danger.' A few moments, and he subsided into 'Proceed with caution.'

'You might make decent house or coach painters some of you; and there's more art in graining a door or picking out the white lines in a gig-wheel than in many of your works; but you're too vain, too idle, to be honest. You adopt the profession of art as an excuse for vagabondism—to be chartered Bohemians, to live unaccountable lives, wear beards, queer-shaped hats, and be abnormal beings altogether.'

'One must live,' jerked out Tim hoarsely.

'Always the rogue's apology; and putting bad pictures into circulation is a good deal like forging bank-notes.'

Tim bowed his head, straddled out his legs, folded his arms, and became as much like the figure of the fifth proposition in *Euclid* as a diagram could resemble humanity. Croppie was silent. Frowning fiercely in the ambuscade of his moustache, he stood in the attitude of Cromwell dissolving the Long

Parliament—the part of Sir Harry Vane being filled on this occasion by Tim Doolan. The cannonading had ceased. Tim fired a pop-gun.

'You're an art-critic, Croppie; your bitter-beer has got into your mind. Look here'—he produced a small bit of card—'don't I make sacrifices for the cause of art? This is all left to me of the elegant gold repayer-watch given me at my christening by the O'Donovan—my godfather. That precious piece of furniture is popped, in plain words, for two pounds ten. Respect the unfortunate!'

Croppie was visibly softened. He knew, we both knew, that the elegant gold repayer was a pinchbeck warming-pan that wouldn't go on any terms; but it is in the nature of grief to exaggerate its bereavements—so Tim received our unhalting sympathy.

'I've had all the hitting to myself,' said Croppie, in a mollified tone. 'Take up the gloves—have a turn at me, one of you. I'm a nice one to talk: look here.' He took sundry bundles of papers from his pockets, and flung them on the floor. 'These are rejected contributions—and these—and these; refused by the *Weekly Crocodile* for not being sufficiently spicy. *Spicy* is the word, as if art-criticism could stoop to the spicy. And here—here is a letter from Burst and Backett: they won't publish my new book, *Art-graphs*, at any price; and—and I think they're about right!'

He stood in a magic circle of crumpled manuscripts—his moustache seemed to hover above them like a sea-gull over a wreck. It was sublime; it even went further: we warmed, we simmered up into a smile, and at last boiled over into a laugh.

'We're in the same boat, Tim.'

'And Bad-luck's the name of her.'

'And yet, I think,' said Croppie, 'if we work honestly, manfully, truthfully, not dallying at the oar, not making-believe to pull, we shall stem the tide against us, reach the shore in safety; and if we don't get rich, Tim, we must balance the pleasures of our professions against their profits. We shall do yet.'

'We'll get out of other men's ruts, and be shunted off into a line of our own.'

'We'll stand by each other.'

'Truth and Hard-work for ever,' shouts Tim; 'and now to light the gas. Let's have a talk, and here's the Kinahan; and do you take sugar? and fill your pipe. Hot or cold wather? And I'll sing *Paddy Looney* or *Mick Mulligan's Wake*; and here's better luck, and many on 'em.'

'The Song of the Studio shall change its tune—there'll be more buyers than pictures yet,' said Croppie prophetically.

'I hope there may,' cries Tim.

I hoped so too.

A NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

THERE is among a small section of the community an objection to making Christmas Eve a time of rejoicing. That a vast majority of the civilised world are accustomed to do so, is doubtless with the rest a principal reason against it; but there may be also other reasons; for, as genial folks are never in want of an excuse for enjoying themselves, so persons of an opposite character have, upon their parts, blankets ready wetted for every emergency of the breaking-out of a social spark. That man, however, must be strait-laced to suffocation—must have been accustomed to the 'eating of vinegar with a steel fork,' with the worst possible results to his internal system—who has anything to say against the merry doings of New-year's Eve.

If, when the labour of the Day is done, there is

always permitted some relaxation to the whole human family—the forty winks after dinner to Paterfamilias, with his feet on the fender and a handkerchief cast over his venerable features; and the half-hour's play with the children to dear mamma, 'between the lights,' when the braiding of Charley's tunic, the embroidery of Lucy's tucker, are put aside for at least one wholesome, loving romp—surely, much more, then, should we all take some ease at the conclusion of the labours of the Year. Then, if ever, in my (maudlin-sentimental?) judgment, should workhouse fires burn cheerily, and workhouse supper-tables groan with meat and beer, and workhouse doors be opened to let miserable street-wanderers in for a glimpse of warmth and comfort, at the end of (it may well be) a whole year's bitter pilgrimage. What a sense of satisfaction would be added to our own enjoyments at such a time, could we feel that every fellow-countryman (and woman) should be certain of at least one good meal that eve—if they could eat it. But even if this could happen, there would be still, as now, a number of persons, of necessity, debarred from anything like social enjoyment. Lighthouse-keepers, railway-guards, doctors in large practice, sorters of the night-mail, and many other exceptional cases, must needs be sacrificed, if the joy of the great majority is to be complete—nay, if their comfort is to be secured. This is an evil which has always been under the sun (and moon), and there is no way, believe me, my Sabbatarian friends, of remedying it. Only let us pity from our hearts, and do what compensating good we can, to persons so unfortunately situated. I would not like, for instance, to be the housekeeper of a lonely mansion, at whatever wages, upon a merry New-year's Eve. That is the point upon which I have kept my eye, my unsophisticated reader, from the very beginning of this paper. It was to introduce that old housekeeper—she was seventy-two, if she was a day—to your notice, that I have been toiling dexterously for these last five-and-twenty minutes. She was not pulled in indecently, and head-first into this narration, you will bear me witness, but led forward delicately by the hand, at the very moment when the audience were about to wonder why, in the name of goodness (or the reverse), the principal person did not make her appearance upon the stage. And this is how I first made the dear old gentlewoman's acquaintance.

In the middle of last summer I arrived at a certain village in the north, much celebrated for its beauty, with the intention of taking lodgings there for my wife and family, who—since the place was generally crowded—were to follow me. It was quite full on this occasion, and likely to be so for a month to come. The hotels were so crammed that many of their private rooms had to be made public; and the lodging-houses in such demand that many of their inmates sat with their heads out of window all day long, on account of there not being any room for them inside; or, it might be, only to obtain a better view of the surrounding scenery, which, in truth, was exquisitely beautiful. Vast hills, made sombre by the pines, which, sentinel-like, stood up on the summits against the clear blue sky, surrounded all the scene except to southward; where a fertile plain went broadening down with 'crowded farms and lessening towers, to mingle with the bounding main.' A swift but shallow river ran through the village, with a bridge of stone, on which, if it was idleness to linger, hour after hour, and catch the changing face of that fair landscape, there were a good many idle people in the place beside myself. Still, as neither of its two dry arches were to be thought of as lodgings for my wife and family, it was necessary that I should quit

that position, and look for accommodation somewhere else. The long white street which made up the little hamlet, it was useless to investigate. The shortest and sparest bachelor employed in a search after a vacant apartment, would not have had the ghost of a chance of finding it; while a domestic person of my girth and length of leg, upon such an errand, would have absolutely exposed himself to public ridicule. In this strait there was nothing for it but to apply to the postmistress, who was likewise the chemist, the librarian, the purveyor of bear's grease to the royal family, and the wine and beer merchant, and who, of course, must needs know everything.

'The house-agent informs me,' said I, 'that there isn't a room to be got to swing a cat in anywhere; now, my dear good woman, do tell me that this isn't true.'

'Do you want to swing a cat, sir?' responded the little lady demurely, whom I at once perceived to be that monstrosity, a female humorist, in addition to her various other professions. I laughed my very best at her, for she was my last hope, and my politeness was fittingly rewarded. Yea; there was a house, three-quarters of a mile down the river, then to let; and there was a white mark on the low wall opposite the place, so that I might know exactly where to look for it.

'But is it so very small, then, that one might pass it without seeing it?' inquired I, a good deal disconcerted.

'It is quite big enough to swing a'—

'Woman,' cried I, interrupting her in her egotistical chuckle, 'be silent; it is one of the miserable habits of your sex to repeat again and again any remark which you have the misfortune to consider good.'

The little postmistress, who was the autocrat of the village, and unaccustomed to reproof, slammed her little gate behind me, so that the shop-bell which hung to it rang quite a peal of indignation; and I flatter myself that I sent her to her medical department for a glass of ether—or sal-volatile at the very least.

If it had not been for the white mark upon the low wall opposite, I should have missed the house I was in search of to a certainty. It was so enveloped and shut in upon all sides by trees, that there was no getting a glimpse at it from the highway at all; there was no road leading to it, but only a steep flight of steps and a winding path; then a pretty little lawn, which, however, the sun's rays could not reach, except at the precise point where a cracked stone-dial stood, and then another steep flight of steps to the front-door. The house would have been a handsome one but for the air of desolation rather than decay which clung to it. There was a veranda over the two front sitting-rooms, wherefrom the miserable creepers were hanging like determined suicides, and darkening the low-roofed chambers with their weird shadows. All within was clean and orderly, and the ancient furniture well kept and well looking, though it had evidently been long disused. The bedrooms were few but capacious, with enormous cupboards in them, and the most curious and inconvenient angles, wherein nothing could be stowed away but walking-sticks and umbrellas. This old-fashioned appearance within, and the air of melancholy without, were the only objections to the house. It was 'lonesome,' explained the old housekeeper, as the reason of its not being let, and I quite agreed with her. I would much rather have agreed with than differed from her, upon that or any other subject. I never saw such determination, such grave purpose, such undeniable resolve, before, in any mortal female. I should have liked to have shut her up alone with that humorous postmistress for twenty-four hours, and have had my

choice for a good big bet as to which would have eaten the other at the end of them. I took the house at once for the shortest term at which she would let me have it, which, I am thankful to say, was only some six weeks longer than I had intended our visit to be. I think if she had insisted upon my buying it, I should then and there have paid her the money down, such an air she had of not being trifled with upon any pretence. When matters were arranged, she led me out into the shrubbery, which surrounded the dwelling in a mysterious and labyrinthine manner, and into the long-grassed desolate orchard which lay at its back. The pine-crested hills could be indistinctly seen through its wilderness of trees, and the noise of the rapid waters dimly heard. It was a very beautiful spot for all its 'lonesomeness,' and as cheap as romantic.

'I wonder,' mused I, half to myself, 'that any difficulty should have been found in letting it.'

'I always let it, over and over again,' answered the old housekeeper, startling me with her melancholy tone, 'but the folks never come after all.'

'Ah, they don't like to refuse you, my good lady,' said I comfortingly; and, indeed, I could not blame them for their want of firmness.

I, however, returned, for my part, with my wife and family, and spent some very pleasant months in the house with that dear old soul. You will have misjudged her, reader, cruelly, as I did, if you think her anything else but an honest, brave-hearted, grand old woman. During all her lonely residence in that desolate spot—and she lived quite alone in it—she had never been frightened; and only once felt at all 'uncomfortable like'; that once was last New-year's Eve.

She had gone into the village to make merry on that evening with some relatives of hers; and on her return to the desolate dark walks and lawn, the scene, contrasting itself with that festive one which she had just left, did seem to her unusually comfortless and eerie. The strong iron shutters with which the house was plentifully provided were, however, firmly fastened, for she tried them all outside; and the key of the door she had in her pocket. Once inside, therefore, it was clear she had nothing to fear except from her imagination. She got inside, and fastened the door behind her; but even then could not shake off that uneasy sensation, which she was so unaccustomed to and ashamed of. The long rope of the alarm-bell hung down as usual, through the two stories to the hall-floor itself, quite ready to her hand, and, she confesses, she had at least half a mind to ring it.

But she passed up the two flights of stairs and into her bedroom, with as firm a step, or nearly so, as on other occasions. Once there, however, she did a very unusual thing indeed. Having locked and bolted her door, she placed in front of the keyhole, and about her candlestick, a heap of shawls and cloaks, so that no light should be visible either through window, shutter, or door. And thus she waited for the approach of the thief, whose feet she had seen under the curtains of the great hall-window as she came in. She watched from half-past ten till nearly twelve (and we question whether that New-year's Eve was being spent by any elsewhere under such exciting circumstances); till at last 'my gentleman'—she always called him so in her narration—came up, as she had expected, and tried her door. Finding that fastened, he stooped down and looked through the keyhole, and listened with great attention. He heard the old lady breathing very stertorously, after the manner of an old lady who had supped heavily, and was suffering for it in her sleep; and he saw no light. Next he struck a match; and she, observing to herself that one light would do for both of them, then extinguished her

candle. Cautiously letting herself out, she followed the robber down the stairs to the front-door. He opened it, stood on the topmost of the steep stone steps with his flaring light, and whistled once, twice, thrice. At the third whistle, the old housekeeper crept up to him, and, to use her own expression, 'tipped my gentleman down them steps like a sack;' after which, not trusting to the lock which had already proved so faithless, she very swiftly bolted and barred the door. She did not think it was worth while to ring the alarm-bell, as the foes were now all outside, and she had the greatest confidence in the strength of the house-fastenings; but she sat up in the hall for the rest of the night. The old housekeeper owns to this much only of alarm, that it was rather a 'grewsome' way of seeing an old year out and a new year in; and I, as usual, quite agree with her.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

RAILWAY IMPROVEMENTS.

THERE appears to be a growing notion that railway directors are far from shewing an alacrity in adopting improvements in the mechanism of transit; as, for example, the forms of the carriages, and arrangements connected with them, remain as they were at the outset of the railway system. The complaint is, that directors do not look abroad to see what is done elsewhere—that they persistently go on in the old way, seemingly unconscious that they are in a world of general advancement. As far as we can judge, the cause of this alleged torpor is the financial difficulties into which nearly all railway companies have got, as well as the constant expenditure of time in projects of rival extension. The development of traffic, by holding out particular inducements to travel, is about the last thing thought of; just as if a shopkeeper were to occupy himself incessantly about his accounts and finances, instead of planning how he could, by keeping a proper stock of wares, tempt people to come and buy from him.

Public convenience is felt not to be consulted in various ways. Not to speak of occasionally harsh regulations respecting return-tickets, there appears to be a defect in confining the sale of all kinds of tickets to the space of a few minutes at an overcrowded and small wicket. Why not allow the public to buy parcels of tickets, to be used according to convenience? The extent to which the price of fares might be reduced on groups of tickets, we leave to be determined by circumstances; at the same time, we feel assured that, if some inducement of this kind was held out, many more tickets might be sold. At present, certain persons buy season-tickets, which enable them to travel to and fro daily; but numerous individuals do not want to travel daily; they wish only to travel twice in the week; yet, except in very special cases, tickets are not sold for this latter purpose. In the case of families in the country who wish to invite friends, parcels of transferable tickets would be particularly convenient; nor do we see why railway tickets might not be given as prizes, and distributed in many other ways advantageous to all parties concerned.

Besides complaints as to the want of smoking-carriages, such as are common in Germany, there is much dissatisfaction on the ground of there being no accommodation for sleeping. In Canada, and also in the state of New York, provision has been made for

sleeping in a lying posture in the railway carriages, and the system works satisfactorily. In the Canadian Great Western line, the cars, which are more open than ours, are divided longitudinally, by a partition, so as to leave a passage along each side. Sleeping-berths, like those in a ship, are arranged tier above tier in each of these compartments; one side being for ladies, the other for gentlemen—the partition forming a proper line of separation. From the following account of a correspondent in a New York newspaper, dated Buffalo, November 8, 1858, it will be seen that the same ingenious plan of sleeping-berths for night-travel has been realised:

'I do not know that I can give you a clearer notion of the estimation in which the new feature just introduced into the appointments of the New York Central, in the form of a "sleeping-car," is held by travellers, than to mention two or three facts that came under my observation in passing over the road from Albany to this place, night before last. There is usually a light train, Saturday night, particularly in the 11.45 run, for the reason that passengers bound west are constrained to lie over at Buffalo or the Falls until Monday, no trains running on either side of the lake on Sunday; and they contrive to start at such a time as to reach their point of destination by the end of the week; and the six o'clock train takes nearly all the way travel. So, as I said, the New York express train, which leaves Albany at 11.45, usually carries comparatively few passengers. I came up on that train Saturday night. It consisted of four passenger-cars—the sleeping-car and three of the company's ordinary coaches. The number of passengers, exclusive of employés of the road, when we left Albany, was sixty-eight, of which thirty-seven had berths in the sleeping-car, and thirty-one were distributed through the company's cars. Three or four of the sleepers got off at different points, and their places in the car were supplied by accessions at other points; so that we came into Rochester with about our original number—exceeding, all the way through, the aggregate of passengers in the other cars. The passengers spoke in terms of warm approbation of the conveniences and comforts afforded by the newly invented car, and the opinion was freely expressed that night-travel on rail, instead of a thing to be dreaded, was really more agreeable than travel by day. We arrived at Rochester about seven in the morning, where we stopped to breakfast. On our return to the sleeping-car, we found that the attentive conductor had transformed our couches into the most commodious and luxurious seats I ever saw on a railway. You will not care for a detailed description of the sleeping-car. It is enough to say that it is very strongly constructed, and tastefully fitted up with every convenience for a night's ride, each passenger being furnished with a comfortable berth, a pillow, and a blanket; that everything is neat and tidy, and must be kept so if the enterprise is to succeed.'

AN ADDITIONAL WORD ON THE SEEMINGLY REMEDILESS EVIL.

Really, Paterfamilias must see to it. Every day, the newspapers bring us suggestions against the dangers which the young ladies are incurring through their inflated dresses. One speaks of guards on all fires; another recommends a previous dipping of the expanded dresses in a weak solution of zinc, by way of rendering them less inflammable. A clergyman warns his female hearers that the seats in his chapel are calculated each for a certain number of moderately dressed people, and if the full number come, they must be accommodated, howsoever particular ladies may be squeezed for it. But worse than

all this, the 'Unconfined'—that direly dangerous sort of people—have caught up the case, and 'gone off' upon it.

We must infer that such is the fact from the results of a trial lately concluded at Liverpool. Two ladies of that city, who, though both under fourteen, have already got themselves invested in steel-hooped dresses, walked out on the Princes' Road, with their governess, Miss Marsh, on the 1st of November last, between one and two o'clock, when a man assailed one with a knife, with which he attempted to cut her dress, exclaiming: 'These ropes, these ropes, these ropes—I must cut them!' He was beaten off; and the ladies, three days after, were led to the belief that their assailant was a young man of most respectable position and character, named Mr John Huntingdon, whom they accordingly caused to be taken up, consigned to a jail, and in due time tried for the alleged offence. Owing to the general interest in the case, it was necessary to conduct it in St George's Hall, one of the largest, and perhaps the most beautiful in Europe. There, before the gaze of four thousand people, was exhibited the mutilated dress, 'reduced to something like the shape and dimensions of a stick of celery'—so great a deception it was. The attempt to identify this respectable young man as the culprit completely and disgracefully broke down; and such was the public sense of the hardship to which he had been subjected, that the crowd drew his carriage along the streets in triumph. This memorable trial has of course an interest of its own, both in respect of accusers and accused, as well as for their townfolk in general; but it is nothing to us beyond what it leads us to infer as to the actual, though unknown offender. We can entertain not the least doubt that he must be a member of the class just designated—that great class of people who have morbid tendencies, but are not insane enough to require being locked up. There is a constant quantity of such everywhere, and we always see that their predisposed minds fasten upon anything which is much spoken of, or adverted to frequently in the newspapers. When we consider the emotions of disgust and contempt which these shameful dresses are calculated to excite even in sober and sound minds, we need not wonder much that an excitable one should be impelled to fall upon an example with a knife, and madly try to redress outraged propriety. This, of course, is a kind of action which cannot be unattended with danger, not to speak of the unpleasant consequences which may follow from the very notoriety incurred by the victim. We would therefore have *Paterfamilias* to look to it. It is a matter trivial in itself; but if we are right in our deduction, he will see that it may not be trivial in its results.

GOOD WATER COME—BAD WATER GO.

The town of Ely, although in an unfavourable low situation, has benefited in a remarkable manner from going under the Public Health Act in 1851. The chief improvements effected were an introduction of good water, and the establishment of drains to carry off refuse. The average annual mortality during seven years before these changes, was 26 in 1000 inhabitants. In seven subsequent years it was 19 per 1000 (in the last two years, only 17). It is also stated that there has been a special improvement of health to the young—a matter of immense consequence to the future welfare of the community. It is not alone by the rate of mortality of ordinary times that we must measure the benefits of sanitary measures. The place in which, as in Ely, putrid matters are banished, becomes the less liable to pestilences. This has been shewn by a report of Dr Acland, of Oxford, on a typhoid fever which occurred last year at the village of Great Horwood, containing a population of 704. One hundred persons were attacked,

and 18 died; and the cause was clearly traceable to overcrowded dwellings, cesspools, and want of ventilation. These, the *Times* remarks, 'constitute a laboratory of pestilence which the beauties of nature, woods and pastures, brooks and flowers, can adorn, but not counteract.'

AFTER THE BATTLE.

The drums are all muffled; the bugles are still;
There's a pause in the valley—a halt on the hill;
And the bearers of standards swerve back with a thrill
Where sheaves of the dead bar the way;
For a great field is reaped, heaven's garners to fill,
And stern Death holds his harvest to-day.

There's a voice on the winds like a spirit's low cry—
'Tis the muster-roll sounding—and who shall reply?
Not those whose wan faces glare white to the sky,
With eyes fixed so steadfast and dimly,
As they wait that last trump which they may not defy,
Whose hands clutch the sword-hilt so grimly.

The brave heads, late lifted, are solemnly bowed,
And the riderless chargers stand quivering and cowed,
As the burial requiem is chanted aloud,
The groans of the death-stricken drowning;
While Victory looks on, like a queen, pale and proud,
Who awaits till the morrow her crowning.

There is no mocking blazon, as clay sinks to clay;
The vain pomps of the peace-time are all swept away
In the terrible face of the dread battle-day:
Nor coffins nor shroudings are here;
Only relies that lay where the thickest the fray—
A rent casque and a headless spear.

Far away, tramp on tramp, peals the march of the foe
Like a storm-wave's retreating—spent, fitful, and slow,
With sounds like their spirits that faint as they go
By yon red-flowing river, whose waters
Shall darken with sorrow the land where they flow
To the eyes of her desolate daughters.

They are fled—they are gone; but oh, not as they came,
In the pride of those numbers they staked on the game.
Never more shall they stand in the vanguard of Fame,
Never lift the stained sword which they drew;
Never more shall they boast of a glorious name,
Never march with the leal and the true.

Where the wreck of our legions lay stranded and lorn,
They stole on our ranks in the mists of the morn.
Like the giant's of Gaza, their strength it was shorn
Ere those mists had rolled up to the sky:
From the flash of our steel a new daybreak seemed born
As we sprang up—to conquer or die.

The tumult is silenced; the death-lots are cast;
And the heroes of battle are slumbering their last.
Do ye dream of yon Pale Form that rode on the blast?
Would ye face it once more, O ye brave?
Yes! the broad road to Honour is red where ye passed,
And of Glory ye asked but—a grave!

E. L. H.

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